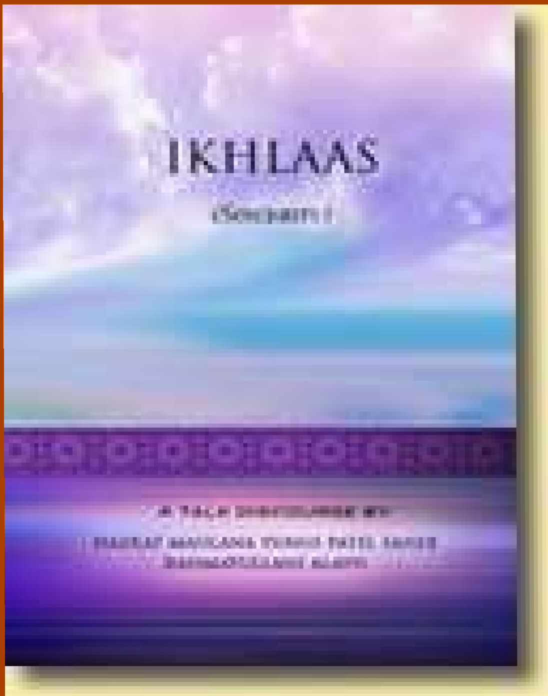

IKHLAAS

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

FOREWORD

All praise is due to Allah Ta'ala, the Inspirer of Faith,
The Most Merciful and The Most Beneficent.
Salaat and Salaam upon the Crown of the Believers,
Sayyidina Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), eternally.

This book is a compilation of a discourse given by our honourable Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ). At the time of the talk, Hazrat Maulana, who was a heart patient, was extremely ill. Despite Hazrat Maulana's ailing health, his deep-hearted love to impart the knowledge of Deen inspired him to continue with the weekly programmes.

And that was the sincerity of Hazrat Maulana: despite his ill-health, Hazrat Maulana immersed himself in serving Deen and serving the Creation of Allah Ta'ala. Such sacrifice, devotion and sincerity, rarely to be found, was most instrumental in availing and benefiting the Ummah at large. And there are numerous recipients of the sincere kindness and assistance of Hazrat Maulana, who will acknowledge the same.

The discourse radiated with Noor and sincerity and Alhamdulillah, was found so beneficial that it was transcribed for the benefit of others as well. This compilation also includes a few complementary and supplementary extracts taken from other talks by Hazrat Maulana.

Hazrat Maulana was the Khalifa of two great spiritual personalities: Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and

was, himself, the mentor and preceptor of thousands throughout the world.

Alhamdulillah, Muslims, all over the world, still benefit greatly from the teachings of Hazrat Maulana. Due to the Fadhl (Grace) of Allah Ta'ala, and the Barakaat (Blessings) of Hazrat Maulana's efforts, many have become practical and sincere believers and worshippers of Allah Ta'ala, as well as devoted followers to the way of life of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم).

May Allah Ta'ala make this very humble effort, purely and solely for His Pleasure. May He grant us all, the reality of Ikhlaas. May He make this a means of Taubah, guidance, inspiration and steadfastness, as well as a Sadaqah-e-Jaariyah (perpetual reward) for Hazrat Maulana, myself, and all those who kindly contributed in this publication.

May Allah Ta'ala grant Hazrat Maulana lofty stages in the Hereafter.

Zul Hijjah 1435 / October 2014

NB.: Do not touch the Arabic script of the Aayaat (verses) of the Qur`aan Shareef if not in a state of Taharah (cleanliness) – i.e. Wudhu, or Ghusl (if required).

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَ كَفٰى وَ الصَّلٰوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا الْمُصْطَفٰى

صَلَى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى اٰلِهٖ وَ اَصْحَابِهٖ وَ بَارَكَ وَ سَلَّمَ تَسْلِيْمًا كَثِيْرًا كَثِيْرًا كَثِيْرًا

اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَقَدْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالٰى

اَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْم

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِيْ وَ نُسُكِيْ وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِيْ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝

"SAY (O MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه وسلم)): 'VERILY, MY SALAAH (PRAYER), MY SACRIFICE, MY LIVING, AND MY DYING ARE FOR ALLAH, THE LORD OF THE WORLDS.'"

[SURAH AL-AN'AAM 6 : 162]

'Ulama-e-Kiraam, most respected brothers and also our sisters at the Madrasah. Make Dua that Allah Ta'ala gives me the strength to say something, since you have sat to hear something and I have sat to say something.

In whichever condition our Allah Ta'ala keeps us, we must be pleased and happy. Sometimes He decrees health, wealth, prosperity and gives to us everything we desire, and then tests us for Shukr (gratitude); and sometimes He decrees ill health, poverty or some other trial and tribulation and then tests us for Sabr (patience).

Once again, that couplet of Hazrat Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) comes to mind:

"In whichever condition He keeps me,
It is the best condition for me;
Through whichever route He takes me,
It is the easiest route for me."

Once we develop this Yaqeen (conviction), then everything in life becomes easy. However, we are extremely weak, and hence, neither should we try to display our strength, nor should we ask for difficulty.

RASULULLAH'S (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) VISIT TO THE SICK

Hazrat Maulana Jalaluddeen Rumi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) related in his Mathnavi Shareef, a story of a Sahabi[1] (رَضِىَ الله عَنْه) who fell very ill. Having heard of the Sahabi's (رَضِىَ الله عَنْه) extreme suffering, Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) visited him.

The Sahabi (رَضِىَ الله عَنْه) was overjoyed with the blessed presence of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), and seemed to have been endowed with a new lease to life.

As a poet aptly said:

"Seeing the shine on the face of him who arrives;
It is understood that the afflicted one is well."

[1] Sahabi: A Companion of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم)

After having spent some time with the Sahabi (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه), Nabi (صَلىاللهُعَليْهِوَسَلم) took leave. Before departing, Nabi (صَلىاللهُعَليْهِوَسَلم) asked him if he had made any specific Dua when he had enjoyed good health.

After reflecting a little, the Sahabi (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) replied in the affirmative, saying that he had asked Allah Ta'ala to grant him, in this world, the punishment for his faults and shortcomings, which would be meted out to him in the Aakhirah (Hereafter).

Rasulullah (صَلىاللهُعَليْهِوَسَلم) expressed his disapproval and forbade him from making such a Dua.

…A person making such a request is indirectly making a claim that he has the power and strength to endure the punishment of Allah Ta'ala – and this goes against 'Abdiyyat (servitude).

Rasulullah (صَلىاللهُعَليْهِوَسَلم) advised him to rather make Dua:

رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا فِى الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَّقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

"O OUR SUSTAINER, GRANT US GOOD IN THIS WORLD AND GOOD IN THE HEREAFTER, AND SAVE US FROM THE TORMENT OF THE FIRE."

When the Sahabi (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) followed through with the noble counsel of Nabi (صَلىاللهُعَليْهِوَسَلم), he very quickly regained his health.

HAZRAT 'UMAR (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه)

Hazrat Umar (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) was once heard saying: *"Aah! Aah!"* due to pain.

…This reminds me of a beautiful exposition given by my Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ). He said that in the beautiful and exquisite name of Allah, lies the 'Aah' of the servants of Allah Ta'ala.

Out of His Loving Kindness and Compassion, our Beloved Allah has included the 'Aah' of our distress in His Personal name, Allah; so that when we experience pain, grief and sorrow, we may remember Him and call upon Him.

The names of the numerous and diverse 'deities' of other religions do not have a name as the name of our Allah, which is not only sweet, as it is gentle, but also a name that includes the plea of His servant… سُبْحَانَ الله

…Someone said: *"O 'Umar, You are Khaleefatul Muslimeen, and so powerful and strong that the mention of just your name instils fear and awe into the hearts of even the Persian and Roman Emperors; and here you are saying: 'Aah! Aah!'?"*

Hazrat 'Umar (رَضِىَ الله عَنْه) replied: *"Allah Ta'ala desires to show that despite the apparent strength of this ruler, look at his weakness. I am in pain and He wants me to reveal and acknowledge my weakness, whilst not complaining of Him."*

It is not permissible to complain **about** Allah Ta'ala.

Who can have more Sabr and Shukr than the Beloved of Allah Ta'ala, Nabi Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم)? …Yet on one occasion, he had a cloth tied tightly around his blessed head, and was saying: *"Wa-raasaah"* (meaning: *'O, what a pain in my head.'*), due to the severity of his headache.

That was, however, not a complaint about Allah Ta'ala.

COMPLAINT

The complaints of the Ambiyaa (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلام) were always <u>to</u> Allah Ta'ala and not about His decisions.

Nabi Ya'qub (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام), on being separated from his beloved son, Hazrat Yusuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام), said:

إِنَّمَآ أَشْكُوْا بَثِّيْ وَ حُزْنِيٓ إِلَى اللّٰهِ

"...I ONLY COMPLAIN OF MY GRIEF AND SORROW <u>TO</u> ALLAH..."

[SURAH YUSUF 12 : 86]

Allah Ta'ala makes mention of Hazrat Ayyub (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام):

وَ أَيُّوْبَ إِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗٓ أَنِّيْ مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَ أَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ۚ

"AND (REMEMBER) AYYUB, WHEN HE CRIED <u>TO</u> HIS LORD: 'VERILY DISTRESS HAS SEIZED ME, AND YOU ARE THE MOST MERCIFUL OF ALL THOSE WHO SHOW MERCY.'"

[SURAH AL-AMBIYAA 21 : 83]

To complain of one's grief, pain and distress **<u>to</u>** Allah Ta'ala does not go against Sabr, and to make mention of the same to others, without complaining about Allah Ta'ala's decision, does not negate one's Sabr.

If a person has to go to a doctor and he says that he has pain in his arm or in his chest, then this is information about the condition of his body. When a person makes known his sickness or problem, it should be to inform, if necessary, and not complain about the decision of Allah Ta'ala.

Of course, that person should blame himself (or herself) if the pain, wound or ill health is self-inflicted, due to smoking, drug-taking or doing anything wilfully, which causes ill health or injury.

TREATMENT

In so far as health is concerned, it is the Hukm (order) of Allah Ta'ala that we take care of the gift of health and well-being. The body is the 'vehicle' given to us by Allah Ta'ala. It will, via the 'fuel' of Imaan and A'maalus Sawleha (righteous deeds), transfer us safely to our home in Jannah, Insha-Allah.

We should just reflect on the fact that we pay for spectacles, medication, ointments, etc. yet for this breathing, eyesight, hearing and other blessings, no bill has been posted to us. …Imagine if Allah Ta'ala had to send us a bill for every Ni'mat (bounty) that He grants to us?

…It is a Sunnah of Nabi Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and his companions (رَضِىَ الله عَنْهُمْ) to take treatment.

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: ***"Allah has sent down both the disease and the cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourselves, but use nothing unlawful."[2]***

Therefore, seek some cure and take treatment, but believe firmly that cure is from Allah Ta'ala.

Hazrat Ibraheem (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام) also taught us this trust and faith in Allah Ta'ala:

[2] Abu Dawood

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ۙ

"AND WHEN I AM ILL, IT IS HE WHO CURES ME."

[SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA 26 : 80]

I had mentioned in a previous talk that there is effect in Dua and 'Dawa' (medicine). Shifa (cure) will only come by the Will of Allah Ta'ala, but the Dua will never go to waste. It may be that Allah Ta'ala gives the person something better than what he had desired.

A Mu'min (Believer) is satisfied under all conditions. Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mentioned: **"The Mu`min is indeed wonderful. When goodness comes to him, he praises Allah and offers Shukr (gratitude), and when misfortune strikes him, he praises Allah and adopts Sabr (patience)."[3]**

However, due to our weakness, we need to ask Allah Ta'ala for Aafiyah (well-being), good health, long life, happiness, contentment and prosperity. Thereafter, whatever conditions come our way, we accept.[4]

A RAHMAH

Hāji Imdadullah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) was once explaining that sickness is a Rahmah (mercy) of Allah Ta'ala and should be appreciated also. In sickness, one's sins are washed away. For the pious and righteous, Allah Ta'ala grants them higher stages in Jannah, Insha-Allah.

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[3] Sahih Muslim

[4] For more on this subject, read the book, 'Tafweez'; obtainable free from the publishers.

No sooner did he make mention of this, a person arrived complaining of ill-health and requesting Dua to Allah Ta'ala, for a cure from his illness.

In a splendid manner, Hāji Imdadullah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) removed any doubt that may arise in a person's mind. He prayed: **"O Allah, even though sickness is a Rahmah, due to our weakness we cannot endure the Rahmah of sickness. We therefore ask of You to change it to the Rahmah of good health."**

We should always seek Aafiyah (well-being and protection).

This was the advice of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), since a person could not be granted anything better than Aafiyah, after having been blessed with Imaan. Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: **"Ask Allah for forgiveness and Aafiyah, for verily after Imaan, none is given anything better than Aafiyah."**[5]

IKHLAAS - THE MISSING INGREDIENT

Returning to the Ayah (verse) that I recited at the beginning:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَ نُسُكِي وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِي لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ۝

"SAY (O MUHAMMAD (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم)): 'VERILY, MY SALAAH (PRAYER), MY SACRIFICE, MY LIVING, AND MY DYING ARE FOR ALLAH, THE LORD OF THE WORLDS.'"

[SURAH AL-AN'AAM 6 : 162]

If we were to look within ourselves and reflect over our actions, we will find Ikhlaas is that ingredient which is lacking in our

[5] Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadīth: 3558

Ibaadah (worship), in our Mu'aamalaat (dealings), Zikr, Tilawah[6], Ta`leem[7], charities, in the establishment of many of our Deeni institutes and so too, in many of our religious activities.

No doubt, there are those who participate in some field of Deeni (religious) works with Ikhlaas. There are also those who attend different programmes with the desire to be practising and good Muslims. However, this is a very small percentage.

A negligible number are found so sincere, that they think or say to themselves: ***All I want is to fill my heart with the Noor of Taqwa, and do all that Allah Ta'ala has commanded me to do and abstain from all that Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul, Muhammad*** (صلى الله عليه وسلم), ***have declared as Haraam, and do so for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala alone.***

Due to our deficiency in Ikhlaas, we are not seeing the fruits of our efforts in the massive gatherings that are hosted, in hours and hours of lectures, conferences and seminars, in the multitude of Islamic publications and everything else that we organise and participate in.

The possible reasons are: Either the speaker does not have Ikhlaas in his heart, or the listener does not have Ikhlaas in his heart, or the organisers do not have Ikhlaas in their hearts. **Somewhere, along the line, there is the missing link of Ikhlaas.**

It may even be that the speaker, the listener and the organisers do not have Ikhlaas.

[6] Tilawah : Recitation of the Qur`aan Shareef
[7] Ta'leem : Teaching (Deen)

INSINCERITY

Despite the speakers having outstanding qualifications, no effect, or very little effect is had on the hearts. Such a negative outcome is generally the result of far too much of pretence and show business, accompanied by the echo of emptiness and hollowness. There is no Haqeeqat (reality).

Too often it is found that instead of inviting to Allah Ta'ala, the speaker is inviting to himself or herself.

The desire of the nafs is to draw larger numbers of people to **oneself** and gain name, fame and recognition. Consequently, rivalry, envy and enmity breed in the heart when other speakers have a greater attendance at their gatherings, or whose names have gained greater fame.

Due to this insincerity, diseases such as Riyaa (show), Hasad (jealousy), Kibr (pride), ill-will, egoism, etc. abound in the heart. Most often, due to the dominating presence of pride in the heart, no effort is made of Islaah (reformation) and Tazkiyyah (purification). Subsequently, the person may even reject the need for reformation or consider himself or herself above it.

Moreover, the evils of jealousy, malice and rivalry lead to disparaging remarks and negative criticism directed at contemporaries and so-called rivals. Major sins like gheebat (backbiting) and slander are also resorted to – even in respect to the Ulama-e-Haq and the Mashaa`ik.

If we are inviting to Allah Ta'ala and not ourselves, then we would be supportive, encouraging and an assistance to others

rendering the same or similar tasks; not denying, rejecting and condemning them. This is a clear sign of insincerity and Takabbur (pride). …How can we entertain a superiority complex when we have not an inkling as to whether any of our efforts have been accepted by Allah Ta'ala?

Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) very aptly spelt out a reality:

Whether we live like this or live like that,
What is left to be seen is how our stay there will be
(i.e. in the Hereafter).

…If the weakness does not lie within the speaker, then it may be found within the listener.

Many listeners attend for show, or entertainment and pleasure, or just to accompany friends and meet others, or to buy or sell, or for some other reason besides the desire to listen, practise and convey to others. …Although such attendance does not go without its rewards, the real benefit is not obtained.

Sometimes a person goes to the Khanqah of a pious Shaykh so that he becomes known as one having a close relationship with a great Wali (friend) of Allah Ta'ala, or he goes desiring that he becomes the Khalifa[8] of his Shaykh.

Sometimes contact is made with these pious personalities just for 'Taweez' or some worldly gain. For example: If a person is seen in the company of the pious, it would become easy for him to procure a loan, or even someone's daughter in marriage.

[8] Khalifa: Deputy or representative of a Shaykh.

Since mention has been made, and a very important point comes to mind, it must be understood that Khilafat is given on the basis of the condition of the Mureed whilst he is in the Khanqah.

KHILAFAT

A person once objected and said that a certain Shaykh had given his Mureed (disciple) Khilafat, and some time later the same Khalifa was seen flagrantly indulging in sins. How could the Shaykh grant the distinguished mantle of Khilafat to such a person?

…Therefore we have to understand as to when Khilafat is conferred.

Once, after giving Khilafat to one of his Mureeds, Hazrat Maulana Waseeullah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) said: **"This Khilafat is based on your present condition."** … and most of the Ahlullah say the same; that based on the commendable condition that the Mureed has attained in their company, they are granting Khilafat.

In fact, due to the responsibility and trust connected with the Khilafat, Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) was wont to present a name list of his Khulafa for every passing year, wherein mention would be made as to who had been granted Khilafat and whose Khilafat had been withdrawn, due to neglect and disregard of its conditions.

One Khalifa's Khilafat was withdrawn after a severe chastisement from his Shaykh, because he had paid half the train fare for his son, who was thirteen years old but who could easily pass for a child under the age of twelve.

…So it is not necessary that this spiritual health and well-being will prevail all the time. If a person does not maintain and work towards improving his condition, we cannot blame the Shaykh for that.

THE CERTIFICATE OF GOOD HEALTH

This is similar to a person who goes to the doctor. The doctor checks his pressure, heart beat, sugar, etc. and on the basis of this check-up declares him fit and healthy, and gives him the certificate of good health – so to say.

If this person then goes to a bar, consumes alcohol or takes other intoxicants, smokes, overeats, does not exercise and indulges in anything else, which is damaging to his health, thinking*: "Well I have been given the certificate of good health,"* do you blame the doctor?

The doctor had endorsed and confirmed good health based on the person's condition at the time of his consultation, and would have advised him to keep up his exercise and his healthy eating habits to maintain his good health.

He would have advised him: *"If you maintain your present, healthy diet and lifestyle then, Insha Allah, you will preserve your good health; but if you don't, then it is not necessary that this good health will remain."*

The same applies in the spiritual world. Many progress to a certain level, and the Shaykh, on seeing their favourable condition, grants Khilafat. Those who are granted Khilafat should not think that since they have Khilafat, they do not have to do anything. If

anyone remains complacent or neglects his own spiritual progress, then sooner or later the person could be found in the gutters of sin. (May Allah Ta'ala protect us all.)

On being entrusted with Khilafat, a person should be all the more mindful, attentive and cautious. In fact, the person's fear of Allah Ta'ala should be greater. He should increase in his Zikr, Tilawat, Ibaadah and Duas.

With sincerity and devotion he should adhere, comply and conform to the Sunnah – establishing a firm connection with Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This is the medium of steadfastness and the only way to success – for anyone.

Allah Ta'ala states in the Qur`aan Shareef:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَ يَغْفِرْلَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ ؕ

وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝

"SAY (O MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه وسلم)): IF YOU DO LOVE ALLAH, FOLLOW ME. ALLAH SHALL LOVE YOU AND FORGIVE YOU YOUR SINS; AND ALLAH IS MOST-FORGIVING, VERY-MERCIFUL."

[SURAH AAL-IMRAAN 3 : 31]

On the sincere effort made, the person will then reach a very high stage, Insha-Allah.

…Another point to be mentioned, in regard to the Khilafat, is that sometimes a Shaykh confers Khilafat early, expecting the Khalifa to make an effort and work on those aspects of his life which still require reformation. The Shaykh discerns and perceives in the

person, the ability and potential to do so. Consequently, it is left to the Khalifa to fulfil this hope of his Shaykh.

There are also other reasons whereby a person is granted Khilafat.

Unfortunately, the present trend of some worldly and materially inclined Shaykhs, is their 'dishing out' Khilafat to large numbers of Mureeds. Their evil racket and sham is a cause for concern, since their objective is just to trap more disciples in their nets.

Such corrupt and unethical doings have damaged the good name of Sulook and Tasawwuf. One will find, both the so-called 'Peer' and his 'Khalifas' flagrantly and openly indulging in Haraam, without fear of Allah Ta'ala. Some even shake hands with Ghair-mahram[9] female Mureeds, socialise and 'party' with them.

…In every profession and field you get the good and the bad.

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

In most of our programs, either the speaker is not Mukhlis (sincere) or the listeners are not Mukhlis.

…Degrees and high qualifications are not the key to unlocking the hearts of listeners, to convey the message of Deen. **No matter what qualifications a person may possess or present, if the heart is not enlightened, the mind will not be enlightened and the speech will not be enlightened. Then those words will simply rebound from the hearts of the listeners.**

[9] A ghair-mahram is one with whom marriage is permissible at some stage of one's life.

The person may be applauded for his eloquence, his intelligence, and his brilliant and innovative ideas to cure the ailments of our Ummah, but there is no real effect. **His words will fall on ears but his words will not fall into hearts.** Why?

MINCE KABAAB

Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) once explained that such an orator's condition is likened to mince kabaab… **uncooked.**

There is no desirable aroma from an uncooked kabaab, even though it has all the necessary ingredients. If a person has to take a bite from it, he will soon spit that out. What is required is that the kabaab be grilled over fire. Then its aroma will attract the attention of all.

Many a time, these so-called 'enlightened' scholars, who present flowery oration, have studied books by some authors who are modernists and Orientalists, even Shias and Qadianis. They are thus influenced to the same way of thinking and as a result, sometimes propagate 'Baatil' (falsehood) and even Kufr.

In fact, some of these self-styled Islamic Scholars – of whom there are plentiful in the world – will be found freely intermingling and socialising with the opposite sex at different conferences, missing their Salaah and sometimes even indulging shamelessly in other sins.

There are so many who talk of 'The Rise of Islam', 'The Rise of Islam', yet are unable to rise before sunrise to perform Fajr Salaah – which is a Fardh (compulsory) injunction.

Some are clean-shaven… and yet Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: **"My Rabb commanded me to lengthen my beard and clip my moustache."[10]**

To keep the beard one fist length is Waajib (compulsory) and to shave or shorten it less than this is forbidden.

Sadly, we will find so many Muslims presenting an argument, or even justification, in order to avoid, if not shun, the practical side of Deen (religion). How many are wont to say: *'The heart has to be clean.'?*

If the heart of the eagle is sound, but its wings are clipped, can it ever soar in the skies? …No doubt, the beard, itself, is not the only requirement. Both the outer and inner self have to conform to the teachings of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم).

However, reflect over the serious insinuation, the grave implication, and derogatory and defamatory suggestion made, in such a justification: *"The heart has to be clean."* **… Was not the heart of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), or the hearts of his companions, and all the righteous ones who followed them, clean?**

Together with being clean-shaven, many are without any sign of Islam in their dressing. One hesitates to make Salaam due to the doubt created by their outer appearance. …How does one know that the person is a Muslim, if he cannot be recognised as a Muslim?

[10] At Tabaqatul Kubra of Ibn Sa'd, vol. 1 pg. 449 / Musnad Al Harith; Bughyatul Bahith: 592

So there are many who may be highly-educated, but they lack understanding of the purpose of Islamic knowledge.

If there is no practical implementation, in a person's life, of the Shari'ah and the Sunnah of Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم), then such a person is deficient and weak in his Ma'rifat (Recognition) of Allah Ta'ala.

THE 'AARIFEEN

Allah Ta'ala tells us in the Qur`aan Shareef :

اَلرَّحْمٰنُ فَسْئَلْ بِهٖ خَبِيْراً ۝

"THE BENEFICENT! ABOUT HIM, ASK THE ONE WHO IS AWARE."

[SURAH AL-FURQAAN 25 : 59]

If we want to know about Allah Ta'ala and His Sifaat (attributes), then we have been instructed, in this verse, to ask only those who have recognised Him.

How do we recognise those who have 'Ma'rifat-e-Ilaahi'[11]?

…A mere glance at their lives will reveal their ardent love for Allah Ta'ala, as well as their fear for Him. Having recognised Him, they do not want to displease Him. We will not find disobedience to Allah Ta'ala, in their lives.

Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) recognised Allah Ta'ala the most, and he loved Allah Ta'ala the most. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also feared Allah Ta'ala the most.

[11] Ma'rifat-e-Ilaahi: Recognition of Allah Ta'ala

Although none can attain unto the stage of Ma'rifat, Ishq (Love) and Khauf (Fear) as that of Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the Auliya Allah and the Mashaa`ik of the Ummah attain a degree of the same, by obeying Allah Ta'ala and following in the footsteps of Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

When a person carelessly or deliberately commits sins, this is a clear indication that he has not recognised Allah Ta'ala, unless he is one who makes sincere Taubah. …Even a good Believer can slip and commit an accidental sin. However, he will repent sincerely. He will not be persistent.

To revert to our discussion on 'kabaab': These Aarifeen and Ush-shaaq (lovers) of Allah Ta'ala are likened to the kabaabs that are grilled on hot, burning coal. When grilled, the aroma from those kabaabs creates appetite and desire, in all those who are near, to enjoy the taste of the kabaabs.

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE HEART

When evil desires surface within a person's heart, and he sacrifices those desires for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala; or when those evil desires are thrown into the burning furnace of Taqwa, Noor pours into the heart.

It is this Noor, together with the fragrance emitted from that heart, which becomes instrumental in making a disbeliever become a Muslim, and a weak Muslim become a strong Muslim.

When Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) would give discourses, Janazas left his Majaalis – such was the impact of his words.

An Englishman wrote in regard to Shaykh Mu`inuddeen Ajmeri Chisti (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), after visiting Ajmer: ***'For the first time I saw a man who has passed away, still ruling his people.'***

In just one journey, ninety thousand people accepted Islam at the hands of Shaykh Mu`inuddeen Ajmeri Chisti (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ). What was it? **…It was the fragrance of the heart.**

"He who 'burns' himself up for the pleasure of Allah,
Fills the entire universe with his fragrance."

Without Mujahadah (striving), nothing is attained.

INTENTION

Therefore, if the speaker has no Ikhlaas, he can only convey some knowledge. People who attend his talks, leave in the same condition they arrived – there is no apparent difference or visible change.

If the speaker is Mukhlis (sincere), then the listeners are sometimes not Mukhlis [i.e. they are not really keen on the Islaah (reformation) of the nafs, or it has become routine to attend a weekly program, or go out for some Ta'leem]. As a result, their hearts do not receive that which the speaker is passing on.

If both these categories possess Ikhlaas, then the third party – the organisers – may be defective in intention. Many a time the organisers of such programs are motivated by numerous worldly reasons, and as a result, there is no evident benefit.

In Deeni programmes, either :

1. The speaker is sincere and the audience is sincere, or
2. The speaker is sincere but the listeners are not sincere, or
3. The listeners are sincere but the speaker is not sincere, or
4. Both the speaker and listeners are not sincere.
5. The speaker and audience are sincere, but the organisers are not sincere.

PUBLICATIONS

We can also draw parallels to the thousands of Islamic publications that are printed and distributed. We need to look deep into our hearts and question as to our intention behind writing or compiling a kitaab (book), or publishing a magazine, newsletter, etc.

Is it for the propagation and dissemination of the knowledge of Deen, for the recognition of Allah Ta'ala, and for the benefit of the Ummah; or is it for the propagation and dissemination of our name, for our self-seeking fame, and for the benefit of our egos?

More often than not, the printing of Islamic material, such as Salaah times, Islamic calendars, Ramadaan timetables, etc. is merely a medium of advertisement; to draw more business, and make more money.

Moreover, there are numerous publications that are not even necessary. These are printed only to earn a few extra coins.

Some authors of books or publishers of magazines and newsletters go to prospective donors under the pretext that they wish to do a free distribution of their publication. Donations then pour in. The author publishes 10 000 copies of some booklet or magazine, at R10 a copy. However, the donors are informed that the cost is R15 a copy. The author thereafter pockets R5 x 10 000 = R50 000. …Now where is Ikhlaas?

If the author's intention was to earn a Halaal livelihood, his books should be sold in a book shop as others do, or the donors should have been informed that he is selling it to them at a profit.

One person, who had donated towards some publication, mentioned to me that he was led to believe, by one such publisher, that his donation would be used to distribute two thousand copies free. The printers informed him that the book had been printed for the publisher at a very special price of R10 a copy, whereas the publisher had extracted, from the donors, R15 a copy.

…Then there are Qiraat competitions. The best reader is promised some material gain, e.g. a ticket for Umrah. Which Qari Saheb or Hafez is going to have so much of Ikhlaas that his reading will be solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala?

We find that insincerity abounds in every field. There are only a few exceptions.

ACTIONS AND INTENTIONS

Imam Bukhari (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) begins the first chapter of Bukhari Shareef with the Hadīth: ***"Verily all actions are judged according to the intentions, and verily for every person is what he intended."***

So much of importance is attributed to this Hadīth, that the Ulama state that this Hadīth is, ‘Nisful Fiqh’ (Half of Jurisprudence).

There are also some Ulama who have stated that this Hadīth is ‘Sulusul Ilm’ (A third of Knowledge). The reason for this is that our A’maal (actions) are of three categories:

a.) A’maal connected to the heart,
b.) A’maal connected to the tongue,
c.) A’maal connected to the limbs.

If a good deed is motivated by a good intention and is done for the pleasure of Allah alone, then Allah Ta’ala rewards on that deed. Otherwise, deeds done with ulterior intentions are rejected by Allah Ta’ala. If done for people, Allah Ta’ala will say, on the Day of Qiyamah: ‘**Go to those who you showed off your deeds to, in the worldly life, then see if you can find any reward with them!’**[12]

TASAWWUF

Shaykhul Hadīth, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had mentioned in his biography, Aap Beeti, that a person had asked him to explain the reality of Tasawwuf.

In a capsule, Hazrat Maulana (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) presented its reality, saying: ***“All it is, is to correct ones Niyyat (intention). Nothing else. It’s beginning is: ‘Innamal a’maa-lu bin-niy-yaat’ (Verily all actions are judged by the intentions) and the end is: ‘An ta’-budallaha ka-annaka ta-rahu’ (That you worship Allah Ta’ala as if you are seeing Him).”***

[12] Musnad Ahmad

The former calls for the correction of one's Niyyat. This facilitates the latter, which is known as the state of Ihsaan, and is also termed as Nisbat (connection with Allah Ta'ala).

A mere glance at the lives of our Akaabir, from the time of the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْهُمْ), presents a history replete with wonderful examples. Let us take just one, which even our little children are familiar with: a well-known story, regarding the sincerity of Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه).

THE SINCERITY OF HAZRAT ALI (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه)

Once, during Jihad, Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) overpowered an enemy, and was to strike the final blow with his sword. Just before he could do so, the enemy spat in the face of Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه).

Although that created displeasure, Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) immediately moved away and placed his sword into its sheath. Even though he had the upper-hand and the opportunity to kill the disbeliever, he left him; not even considering that his own life was in danger.

Such strange behaviour confused the enemy and prompted him to question Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه): *"What kind of behaviour is this? After having insulted you, you should have killed me immediately. I was under your sword and helplessly at your mercy. Why did you let me go?"*

Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) replied: ***"All the while, I had been fighting for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. When you spat in my face, my nafs was provoked. My anger was then not sincerely for the pleasure***

of Allah but due to personal injury. Had I killed you, this act would have been tainted with the anger of my nafs. Allah Ta'ala does not accept any deed done without sincerity. I would have been questioned, on the Day of Judgment, about whether I had taken your life for my pleasure or Allah Ta'ala's pleasure."

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ

Hazrat Ali (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) was prepared to become a Shaheed (martyr), but he was not prepared to accept victory while it was blemished with insincerity. His Ikhlaas had such an impact on the heart of the non-Muslim that he accepted Islam.

An important point was mentioned: ***"…Allah does not accept any deed done without sincerity…"***

Hazrat Abu Umamah Al-Bahili (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) narrated that a man came to Rasulullah (صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and asked: *"What is the reward for a person who fought in the path of Allah, seeking reward and fame."*

Rasulullah (صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: *"There is no reward for him."*

The man repeated the question three times to Rasulullah (صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم).

Rasulullah (صَلَّی اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) replied: *"There is no reward for him."*, and then said: ***"Allah Ta'ala accepts those deeds which were performed purely for His Sake and which were meant to seek His Pleasure."***[13]

[13] Al Mujtaba, Hadīth: 3140

HAZRAT ABUL HASAN NOORI (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ)

An incident in the life of Hazrat Abul Hasan Noori (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) comes to mind: On one occasion, whilst walking on the sea-shore, Hazrat Abul Hasan Noori (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) noticed barrels of wine that had been imported for the governor of the district, being offloaded from a boat.

Angered at the arrival of the barrels of wine, which is Haraam (forbidden), he took a chopper, went to where the barrels were, and began to smash them.

He broke nine barrels and left the last one.

From amongst those who had witnessed the incident, some went and reported him to the governor.

Hazrat Abul Hasan Noori (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) was brought before the governor and interrogated: *"Why did you this? Who appointed you as our guardian?"*

Hazrat Abul Hasan (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) replied: *"My Allah has appointed me."*

The governor asked: *"Why did you leave the last of the barrels?"*

He replied: ***"The nine barrels that I broke were broken purely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. When it came to the tenth barrel, I detected the hidden hand of my nafs (ego) marring my action and intention. The thought surfaced in my mind: 'What a great person you are to destroy all these barrels destined for the***

governor! What courage and what a feat!' Since my nafs made its appearance, I immediately stopped."

Of course, that was a special condition or 'haal' of that Wali of Allah Ta'ala. It is not proper for any individual to just undertake an action that could create conditions of fitnah (trial), which the person cannot thereafter bear.

Da`wah[14] and advice must be given with Hikmah (wisdom).

AN AABID AGAINST SHAYTAAN

Imam Ghazali (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had related an incident of an Aabid (a great worshipper and devotee) of the Bani Isra'eel, who remained occupied in Ibaadah (worship) most of his time.

…It is not sufficient for a Muslim to confine himself to physical Ibaadah only. The performance of Salaah, the recitation of Qur`aan Shareef and Zikrullah are not sufficient. It is the duty of Muslims to invite others to Islam; as well as call Muslims, by means of speech, wa'z, Nasihah (advice), Amr-bil-ma`roof and Nahy-anil-munkar[15], to the practical implementation of the Ahkaam (Laws) of Islam. However, this should be done in an appropriate manner.

Nonetheless, certain things were permissible for the Bani Isra'eel; hence the pious man engaged himself in Ibaadah.

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[14] Da'wah : Inviting to Deen

[15] Amr-bil-ma`roof and Nahy-anil-munkar : Invitation towards good and forbidding of evil

A group of people informed the Aabid that a tribe nearby was worshipping a tree. He was naturally very disturbed and upset, and decided to cut down the tree. With an axe in hand, he set off to fulfil the task.

On the way, shaytaan, in the form of an elderly man, met him and enquired: *"Hazrat, where are you going?"*

He replied: *"I am going to cut down a tree that is being worshipped by a people. It is my duty to destroy it."*

Shaytaan persuaded him thus: *"Why concern yourself with such matters? Let them worship what they wish. It would be better for you to continue with your Ibaadah. Why give up your Ibaadah for something that Allah has not assigned you to do?"*

…Prior to the advent and Nubuwwah (Prophethood) of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), the other Ambiyaa and their respective Ummats had not been given the duty that Allah Ta'ala has assigned and entrusted to Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and his Ummah.

The previous Ambiyaa were sent to specific nations, or special groups of people, for their guidance, and Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) was sent as a guidance for all of mankind.

No Nabi came or is to come after Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) – with the exception of Nabi Eesa (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام), who will return as an Ummati (follower) of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), and not as a new Nabi. Hence, this distinguished honour and responsibility, of conveying the message to mankind, has been delegated to the Ummah of Nabi Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم).

Allah Ta’ala says in the Qur`aan Shareef:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَ تَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

وَ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ

“O MUSLIMS! YOU ARE THE BEST OF PEOPLES, RAISED FOR (THE GUIDANCE OF) MANKIND; YOU ENJOIN THEM TO DO GOOD DEEDS, AND PREVENT THEM FROM FORBIDDEN THINGS; AND YOU HAVE FIRM FAITH IN ALLAH.”

[SURAH AAL-E-IMRAAN 3 : 110]

Continuing with the story…

The Aabid said to shaytaan: *“Cutting the tree down is also an Ibaadah!”*

Shaytaan tried to prevent him from cutting the tree. As a result, there followed a struggle between the two, in which, the Aabid, with the Help of Allah Ta’ala, overpowered shaytaan.

Helpless and defenceless, shaytaan apologised for having angered the Aabid and meekly requested to be excused. When the Aabid released him, shaytaan again said: *“Allah has not made the cutting of this tree obligatory upon you. If cutting it was necessary, Allah could easily have sent a Nabi to these people, to stop them from worshipping the tree, or Allah could have appointed His Messenger to cut the tree.”*

The Aabid again started going towards the tree, determined and bent on having it cut. Another bout ensued, and with the help of Allah Ta’ala, the Aabid was able to defeat shaytaan.

Shaytaan then called for his attention and said: *"I propose a settlement that will be to your advantage!"*

The Aabid agreed to give him a hearing, and shaytaan said to him: *"You are a poor man and it must be your heart's desire to help the poor, the orphans, the needy and the widows?"*

The Aabid replied: *"Yes, it is my heart's desire that I spend on others."* …He was, after all, a pious one, an Aabid.

Shaytaan continued: *"If you desist from following through with this intention, I will pay you three Dinaars every day, which you will find beneath your pillow. With this, you will be able to attend to your own needs, the needs of others and do many other righteous deeds. Cutting the tree will only be one virtue, which will, in due time, be of no benefit because the people will worship another tree."*

…In those days, three Dinaars (gold coins) was a considerable amount of money. Nevertheless, just recognise the shrewd and cunning nature of shaytaan.

The Aabid contemplated the offer for a while, and since it appealed to him, he conceded to it. For the next two days he received the three Dinaars, as was promised, but on the third day, he found no Dinaars. Enraged at the betrayal and treachery, the Aabid picked up his axe and proceeded towards the tree, with the intention to cut it.

Shaytaan, in the form of the old man, met him on the way. He asked the Aabid as to where he was off to, and the Aabid shouted: *"To cut the tree!"*

Shaytaan said to him: *"I will not allow you to do so!"* A struggle between the two followed, and this time, shaytaan gained the upper-hand and overpowered the Aabid.

The Aabid helplessly pleaded for respite. Surprised at his defeat, he asked shaytaan: *"Who are you?"*

He replied: *"I am Iblees."*

The Aabid then questioned him: *"How was I was able to defeat you twice and now you have been able to overpower me?"*

He replied: *"At first, your anger was purely to earn the pleasure of Allah; your intention was to cut the tree for the pleasure of Allah alone, hence Allah assisted you in overpowering me. This time, however, the three Dinaars was also included in your intention.* ***Your sincerity was contaminated with a few gold coins. Since it was not solely for the pleasure of Allah, you lost.****"*

The Aabid sold a great 'Amal' (good deed) for three Dinaars, and he sold his Ikhlaas for 3 Dinaars. …Why?

…Because he was an ignorant Aabid. As a result, he fell easy prey to the schemes of nafs and shaytaan.

He would not have succumbed to the ploy of shaytaan if he was a learned worshipper, as well as an Aashiq of Allah Ta'ala.

It is therefore required of every Muslim to have that amount of knowledge and understanding of the Qur`aan Shareef and Sunnah that arms him against the tricks and conspiracies of nafs

and shaytaan; because their evil hatched plans take different forms and are extremely subtle.

The Fuqaha (Jurists) and the Ulama-e-Haq are the shepherds of the Ummah, protecting us from various evil elements and enemies – many of whom attack and harm in disguise.

THE JURIST AGAINST SHAYTAAN

To elaborate on the importance of Ilm (knowledge)…

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: **"A Jurist is stronger against shaytaan than a thousand worshippers."**[16]

Firstly, this Hadīth does not refer to ignorant worshippers. An 'Aabid' in the light of Shari'ah is one who sincerely and devotedly worships Allah Ta'ala in accordance with the Sunnah; but is not a Jurist or an Aalim.

We find that shaytaan plots, plans, concocts and contrives various tactics and strategies to distract, obstruct and avert people from the Siratul Mustaqeem (the Straight Path). The Jurist or Aalim is divinely favoured with a deep understanding of Ilm. This Ilm and the Noor (light) of this Ilm, together with the Noor of Ibaadah and Taqwa – **since Taqwa is an essential factor in retaining Noor** – enable him to easily recognise the treachery and deceit of shaytaan. He is thus able to counteract and offset the ploys of shaytaan.

[16] Tirmidhi

…Of course, he has to be an Aalim in the true sense of the word and not just a person who may have spent a few months or a few years at a Madrasah, and then became known as an Aalim.

Hazrat Ibn Abbaas (رَضِىَ اللہ عَنْہ) had related a story, which presents the security of Ilm against the shayateen (devils).

The shayateen say to Iblees: "*O Chief, we delight in the death of a man of knowledge more than we rejoice in the death of a worshipper. The man of knowledge cripples our efforts and endeavours, and the man of worship harms us not in the least."*

Iblees says: *"Come with me."* They go to an Aabid and approach him while he is occupied in his worship, and tell him that they wish to ask him a question. Iblees asks: *"Can your Lord put this world inside an egg?"*

The Aabid hesitantly replies: *"…I do not know."*

Iblees says to the shayateen: *"Do you see the weakness of this Aabid? There is doubt in his answer."*

Thereafter, they call upon a man of knowledge, sitting amidst his companions, engaged in some humour and wit, and Iblees says: *"We wish to ask you a question."*

He says: *"Ask."*

So Iblees asks: *"Can your Lord put this world inside an egg?"*

He replies: *"Yes."*

Iblees asks: *"How?"*

The man of knowledge says:

إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْئاً أَنْ يَقُوْلَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ

"HIS COMMAND WHEN HE DESIRES A THING, IS THAT HE SAYS TO IT: 'BE!' AND IT IS."

[SURAH YASEEN 36 : 82]

Iblees then addresses the shayateen and says: *"The Aabid does not have any effect and influence beyond himself. However, this man of knowledge and insight separates and alienates much of the world from me!"*

The Ulama-e-Haq are a means of security and protection for the Ummah but unfortunately, they are not appreciated and valued as they should be.

Once again, I am referring to the Ulama-e-Rabbaniyyeen; Ulama who **practise** on their knowledge.

Shaykhul Hadīth, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had presented, in one of his literary works, the following statement of Hazrat Umar (رَضِىَ الله عَنْه): **"The death of one thousand devoted worshippers of Allah Ta'ala, who continued in prayer throughout the night and fasted during the day, is lighter upon the Ummah than the death of one Aalim (of Haq) who is acquainted with what is lawful and unlawful in Shari'ah."**

COUNSEL

Whilst the superiority of Ilm is evident, students of Deen and Ulama in general, should not fall prey to and suffer the malady of Kibr (pride) and Ujub (vanity), due to their knowledge.

The Aayaat (verses) of the Qur`aan Shareef and the Ahādīth of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) that highlight the excellence and merit of the Ahle-Ilm (people of knowledge) are in regard to those who **practise** on their knowledge, and who develop the reality thereof in their Zaahiri and Baatini A'maal'[17].

That Aalim who entertains his own 'greatness', 'distinction' and 'status' at heart, making no effort in the direction of Islaah (reformation), Tazkiyyah (purification) and Fanaa`iyyat (annihilation) is devoid of the reality and essence of his knowledge.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), in giving counsel to the Ulama, had stated, that an Aalim, who regards himself with an eye of vanity, should know that he is absolutely nothing.

One Aalim spent ten years teaching Deen, but without effect and success. He, himself, was finding it difficult to practise on his preaching and teaching, and noticed no change in his congregation and students.

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[17] Zaahiri A'maal refers to external deeds. For example : Salaah, Saum, Zakaah, Hajj, monetary dealings, social etiquette, etc.
Baatini A'maal refers to those deeds of the heart and mind. For example : Sincerity, Taqwa, contentment, Sabr, Shukr, etc.

He then adopted the company of a learned Allah Wala Shaykh of his time. The Shaykh accommodated the Aalim with the condition that he remains with him for an entire year. Moreover, he was not to occupy that time in teaching, Imamat or any other service of Deen. During that time, people mocked both him and his Shaykh.

However, after spending the one year, sincerely, in the Suhbat (company) of the Shaykh, the Aalim was granted permission to give discourses. His first speech alone created a revolution in the hearts of his audience.

The Suhbat of the Ahlullah (people of Allah Ta'ala) is essential and can never be over-emphasized.

TRICKS OF SHAYTAAN

Although Ilm is a security, we should not trust in our intelligence and knowledge alone. **We should always understand that we are in need of Allah Ta'ala's protection and safety at all times, at every instance.**

Once, when Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) was occupied in Ibaadah, he saw a brilliant cloud of Noor. A voice called out from the cloud: *"We are so pleased with your worship, that from now on you are exempt from the performance of Salaah and all other duties."*

Recognising the nefarious trickery of shaytaan, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) immediately recited: *"La haula wa la quwwata illah Billah."*[18], and said: *"Despite Rasulullah's* (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

[18] La haula wa la quwwata illah Billah: 'There is no power and might except with Allah.'

closeness to Allah Ta'ala, he was not exempt from Salaah. How can anyone else be absolved of the injunction of Salaah?"

…We also learn from this, that if a person sees a beautiful dream, and in that dream, he is directed towards the commission of something that is evil and Haraam, or something that is declared as Shirk (polytheism), Kufr (disbelief) or Bid'ah (innovation), then that dream is from shaytaan and should be rejected.

Even if one sees a great Wali (friend) of Allah Ta'ala in one's dream, directing one to sin and transgression, then too, such a dream is disregarded. Otherwise, the interpretation must be taken from a person who is well versed in the science of interpretation. He will give the correct meaning of the dream, Insha-Allah.

Shaytaan then told Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ): *"Your knowledge saved you!"*

Even at that time, Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) exercised caution and replied: ***"My knowledge did not save me; Allah Ta'ala saved me."***

This is Ikhlaas.

ACQUIRING ILM-E-DEEN

It is binding and compulsory upon every Muslim to ensure that his Aqaa`id (Beliefs) are correct, and to acquire knowledge of Fiqh (Jurisprudence) as is applicable to him in his daily life; as a father, husband, businessman, etc. Along with this, is the obligation of implementing the same, practically.

When learning Fiqh, a Muslim should begin with what pertains to him: the Masaa`il (rules) of Taharah, Salaah, Fasting, Zakaah, Trade, Nikah, Talaaq, etc. and so too the categories of these Masaa`il: Fardh, Waajib, Sunnat, Haraam, Makrooh and so forth. Moreover, this knowledge needs to be obtained from Ulama-e-Haq or their writings; otherwise a person can easily be misguided.

An important point to note, is that there are several Aayaat of the Qur`aan Shareef as well as Ahādīth that require an explanation. Many people are wont to interpret Aayaat, Ahādīth and other Deeni issues, based on the influence of their nafs, or based on reasoning which is not accompanied with the guidance of true learning, or based on even ignorance. As a result, such people are easily led astray; in fact they become the means of others being led astray. May Allah Ta'ala protect us all.

Shaytaan presents distorted and misleading interpretations. Outwardly it may appear as correct but the reality is, that the person has become far removed from Haq.

It is therefore necessary that a person does away with his prejudices and finds out from the Ulama-e-Haq; for these Ulama possess true learning and deep insight to the knowledge of Deen. They have been well grounded in the principles of knowledge. Request them for the explanation of that knowledge which requires comprehension and understanding.

Of course, and I repeat, do not ask just anyone with a title of 'Hazrat', 'Maulana', 'Shaykh', 'Ameer', 'Imam' or 'Mufti'. First check his credentials. …Because one of the cheapest commodities

these days is titles. …Certificates can be obtained, ‘a cent, a dozen’. **So check. Verify.**

Muhammad bin Sireen (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had conveyed this importance, saying: **“This knowledge is a matter of Deen, so be careful who you take your Deen from.”**

DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS

Furthermore, differences of opinions are found amongst the Ulama-e-Haq, and they were also found amongst the Sahabah-e-Kiraam (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ), the four Imams, the Tabi`een and the Fuqaha (Jurists).

A difference of opinion does not mean that an Aalim, who is on Haq, is in the wrong. His opinion must be based on Daleel (proof) taken from the Qur`aan Shareef and Ahādīth, and not from his ‘pocket’. …The Scholars of Deen regard ‘differences of opinions’ as a mercy for the Ummah. Hence these opinions should be valued.

It is most unfortunate that due to misunderstanding or plain ignorance, many Ulama-e-Haq are disliked, criticised, rejected and condemned because of their differences of opinions. This attitude is a most grievous and serious offence in the sight of Allah Ta’ala.

…A significant point that comes to mind is that the station of Ihsaan can only be attained when Islam and Imaan are perfected in one’s life. This has been deduced from the Hadīth-e-Jibra’eel, wherein Hazrat Jibra’eel (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام) imparted the lessons of Islam, Imaan and Ihsaan.

HADĪTH-E-JIBRA'EEL عَلَيْهِ السَّلام

The following is a summary of the Hadīth-e-Jibra'eel, as reported in books of Hadīth:

On one occasion, Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) was sitting amidst his companions (رَضِيَ الله عَنْهُمْ), when a stranger suddenly appeared, with jet-black hair, very white clothes and with no apparent signs of the effects of travel.

The man passed through the companions (رَضِيَ الله عَنْهُمْ) who were present, and sat before Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم), in such a manner that his knees touched the knees of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and his hands were placed on his thighs.

It has been recorded by Hazrat Umar (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) that the stranger asked Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): *"O Muhammad, tell me what is Islam?"*

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) replied: ***"Islam is that you affirm that there is no deity but Allah and Muhammad is His Apostle, and that you establish Salaah, and pay Zakaah, and observe fasting during the month of Ramadaan, and perform the Hajj, if you can afford the journey."***

He said: *"You have spoken the truth."*

The Sahabah-e-Kiraam (رَضِيَ الله عَنْهُمْ) were surprised that a stranger asked a question, only to confirm the answer as correct.

He thereupon enquired: *"Now tell me, what is Imaan?"*

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) replied: ***"Imaan is to believe in Allah, and His Angels, and His Scriptures, and His Apostles, and to believe in the Resurrection, and the Last Day, and the Divine predestination of good and evil."***

Again, he confirmed the reply: *"You have spoken the truth."*

He thereafter asked: *"What is Ihsaan?"*

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) replied: ***"Ihsaan means that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you cannot see Him, then He sees you*** *(i.e. that you at least have the conscious awareness of Allah Ta'ala watching you)."*

The stranger then asked questions in regard to Qiyamah and its signs, and Nabi (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) made mention some signs that indicate to the proximity and nearness of Qiyamah. On confirming that as well, the stranger left.

When Nabi (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) enquired of Hazrat Umar (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) if he knew who the questioner was, Hazrat Umar (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) replied in the negative.

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: ***"He was Jibra'eel, who had come to you, to teach you your religion."***

The Hadīth has a lengthy commentary and explanation. However, we see that just as Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) presented the importance of Islam and Imaan, so too did Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) highlight Ihsaan.

The fact that the definition of Ihsaan was presented after the definitions of Imaan and Islam, establishes its great importance. Just as we have to make an effort to acquire the knowledge of Islam and Imaan, we should endeavour to obtain the lofty stage of Ihsaan.

Thus, we can say that Ihsaan is realised via Islam and Imaan – because one cannot attain the stage of Ihsaan without correct beliefs (Aqaa`id) and practice upon the Shari'ah, which is Islam.

…A salient condition and requirement of Ihsaan is the Suhbat of the Ahlullah.

ILM AND TAQWA

Even though a concerted effort has to be made in procuring the treasure trove of Ilm, its Noor and its understanding are realised only with Taqwa. Allama Jalaluddeen Suyuti (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) narrated that a person once came to Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and said: *"O Allah's Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم)! I desire to become a great Aalim."*

Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: ***"Keep on fearing Allah, you will become a great Aalim."***[19]

When there is sincere submission and obedience to the orders of Allah Ta'ala, the fountains of knowledge will spring forth from the heart. …Of course, sincere submission and obedience require an initial acquisition of knowledge, as has just been stated; therefore the obligation to seek Ilm-e-Deen.

[19] Kanzul Ummaal

Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: **"The acquisition of (Deeni) knowledge is compulsory on every Muslim."**[20]

Allah Ta'ala says:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰؤُا

"...IT IS ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE KNOWLEDGE AMONG HIS SLAVES THAT FEAR ALLAH..."

[SURAH FATIR 35 : 28]

The Mufassireen (Commentators of the Qur`aan Shareef) have stated that the level of one's fear of Allah Ta'ala depends on the level of one's knowledge. Thus, the distinguishing attributes and qualities of the Ulama-e-Haq from those who just assume the semblance of the Ulama is that in the lives of the Ulama-e-Haq is the fear of Allah Ta'ala. This engenders submission and obedience to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

One who is not obedient to Allah Ta'ala and has no fear of Allah Ta'ala will be found persistent in sins. Such a person will not be categorised amongst the 'Ulama' or Ahle-Ilm, although he may have much knowledge.

Even Ulama-e-Haq can accidentally fall into sin. However, their fear of Allah Ta'ala facilitates Taubah (repentance); and their Taubah is on the level of their Ilm.

Being well versed and acquainted in only the language of Arabic does not make one an Aalim of Deen. ...Abu Jahl was recognised

[20] Ibn Majah

and renowned for his eloquence in the Arabic language, but his epithet is 'Abu Jahl' (The father of ignorance).

ALLAH TA'ALA'S INDEPENDENCE

A very essential and fundamental fact to be understood is that Allah Ta'ala is not in need of us for the propagation of His Deen. We should not consider ourselves as indispensable.

Sometimes, Allah Ta'ala uses even the Kuffaar (unbelievers), Fussaaq (flagrant sinners) and Fujjaar (shameless and immoral ones), to aid His Deen.

Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: **"Allah will strengthen His Deen, even if it be by the means of a sinful person."**[21]

…How often we have seen a non-Muslim member, of some government in the world, suddenly utter statements in defence of the Muslims. Even though it may be to gain votes, or political power, it helps the Muslim Ummah.

My Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) mentioned that if we have to consider the labels attached to, or embossed on our Musallahs, Tasbeehs, etc., we will note: 'MADE IN KOREA', 'MADE IN CHINA', 'MADE IN JAPAN', etc. The majority of the companies manufacturing these items are owned by the Kuffaar. Thus, the Kuffaar are being used in the service of the Muslims.

…Who reads Salaah on those Musallahs? Who praises Allah Ta'ala by means of those Tasbeehs? The Kuffaar or the Muslims?

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[21] Sahih Bukhari 3062

This kind of service will not make the Kuffaar worthy of Jannah, or gain them the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, unless they believe in Him. However, it is of benefit to the Believers. We know that their objective is Muslim business.

…So we should keep before us that we are not indispensable.

When we consider and contemplate over these realities, then sins such as pride, arrogance, Ujub (vanity), Riyaa (show), etc. will be eradicated, Insha-Allah.

One of Allah Ta'ala's Sifaat (qualities) is that He is **As-Samad**. And the Tafseer (commentary) of As-Samad is: **That Being upon whom every single entity of Creation: every man, jinn, creature, atom, etc. is completely and utterly dependent upon, and who is, Himself, absolutely independent of every single thing of His Creation.**

A FOOLISH EXCHANGE

To revert to the lessons derived from the story of the Aabid: For a mere, paltry sum of three Dinaars, the rewards of a great and virtuous action were completely lost, and the Aabid's Nisbat (connection) with Allah Ta'ala was spoiled. **When the intention was contaminated, the deed was nullified.**

May Allah Ta'ala grant us Ikhlaas.

Even though this incident may have occurred centuries ago, in the time of the Bani Isra'eel; if we have to consider our condition in the light of this narration, it is no different.

The Noor of our Ibaadah, Zikr, Tilawah, our time in the Khanqah, in Ghasht, Ta'leem, Tableegh, etc. makes a fleeting appearance for that little while. After these noble deeds and activities, we are sometimes even prepared to sell our Imaan for a few insignificant coins gained through some lucrative Haraam dealing.

At times we lose our good deeds through pride, vanity, show, in seeking name and fame, etc.

BUSINESS

If a business deal is bringing us profit and if its acquisition is through Haraam avenues, then at that time we conveniently forget that we are Muslims because we will be amassing plentiful of the material world.

We forget that just a little while ago we had been sitting for Ta`leem in the Masjid, or attending a Majlis, or we had been occupied with the Zikr (remembrance) of Allah Ta'ala, or that we had been conveying Salaam to Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم), at the Raudha Mubarak:

[22]اَلصَّلٰوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيكَ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللهِ

Or that just a few days ago we were in Ihraam, saying:

[23]لَبَّيكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ لَبَّيكَ

How quickly we forget that we had pledged our obedience. We had said: *"Here we are, O Allah, prepared to accept Your Orders."*

[22] "Salaat and Salaam be upon you O Messenger of Allah."
[23] "Here I am at Your Service O Allah. I am present."

Now we are prepared to sell our Imaan for a few Dinaars or for a few Rands, Dollars or Pounds!

IMAAN

This precious commodity of Imaan, for which little gratitude is expressed, is the only means by which a person can gain Najaat (salvation) in the Aakhirah, and entrance into Jannah.

Unfortunately, Imaan is not recognized as the priceless gift it is, because there has been no sacrifice for it. There are so many who confidently entertain the misconception that since they are born Muslims, they will most certainly die as Muslims, no matter how much in conflict their actions are with Islam.

Our condition is like the foolishness and unscrupulousness of that person who was walking with two pieces of an expensive shawl tied to his feet, while he carried his shoes on his head.

Someone questioned him: *"What is this upside down action?"*

The person replied: *"I received the shawl as part of inheritance, but I had to pay for these shoes with my own money. I am therefore saving the leather of the shoes because my hard-earned money has gone into the purchase of these shoes."*

The condition of our Imaan is like that shawl. We have made no sacrifice for it, so it means nothing to us. We just trample on Imaan and Islam. …Since there was no effort made in obtaining it, that precious Imaan is sometimes even 'evicted' from the heart.

It is due to this lack of appreciation that many leave the fold of Islam and die on Kufr.

Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur`aan Shareef :

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ وَ لَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِىْ لَشَدِيْدٌ ۝

"...IF YOU ARE GRATEFUL, I WILL MOST CERTAINLY INCREASE FOR YOU (MY FAVOURS) BUT IF YOU SHOW INGRATITUDE, VERILY! MY PUNISHMENT IS INDEED SEVERE."

[SURAH IBRAHEEM 14 : 7]

If we appreciate the gift of Imaan, Allah Ta'ala will **increase** us in Imaan and Yaqeen (conviction). If not, it may well be snatched away. May Allah Ta'ala protect us all.

...So we find that our Ikhlaas is lip service. Allah Ta'ala's complaint against His servants has been aptly portrayed in the poetry of one Wali of Allah Ta'ala:

"You keep Me upon your lips
but not within the depths of your heart.
Your faith is limited to your lips;
Your faith is not engraved upon your heart."

This is the reason why we do not retain the Noor of Taqwa within our hearts. We acquire a little and we then destroy the little: through the sins of our eyes, our ears, our tongues, our hands and our feet. How can we expect other people to be impressed and convinced, when we cannot convince ourselves?

Islam and its teachings are, indeed, Haq and its implementation brings peace, happiness, satisfaction, contentment and is the only

means of establishing a firm Ta'alluq (relationship) with Allah Ta'ala, The Creator of the entire universe. Whilst we should have been the first ones to be convinced, our actions display that we are not convinced.

In fact, in our actions there is a resemblance to the attitude of the Jews in the time of Hazrat Musa (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام). When Hazrat Musa (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام) presented them with the Taurah, they said:

سَمِعْنَا وَ عَصَيْنَا

"...We have heard and disobeyed..."

[Surah Al-Baqarah 2 : 93]

Although most of us do not say so with our tongues, because that would adversely affect our Imaan and could expel a person from the fold of Islam, our actions have the same arrogance and insolence of the Bani Isra'eel.

So we find that our arch-enemy, shaytaan, comes to us and tempts us with wealth earned in a Haraam manner, and we foolishly consider and give in to the offer.

Shaytaan entices us, by whispering: *"Take this; it will help you to give to the Masjids and for the Madrasas. When collectors call on you and appeal for funds, you will not be embarrassed by giving only R10. What is so serious if you take interest on your money and thereafter give large amounts to charitable causes? ...Allah will be pleased."* (نَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنْ ذٰلِك)[24]

[24] (نَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنْ ذٰلِك) Na'oozu Billahi min zaalik: We seek Allah's protection from that.

AT WAR WITH ALLAH

One person who charges interest on money that he lends, tried to justify his action by telling his client: *"I don't think that Allah will become displeased with me because if you go to the bank then they will charge you 23% interest, and I am only charging you 10%."* … اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَ اِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْن[25]

Can you see how shaytaan ensnared him; presenting this stupid, deformed and distorted idea, that if the person has to go to the bank, the bank would charge 23%? Is he not then helping his brother Muslim by charging him 10%? Is he not showing sympathy and kindness? How can Allah Ta'ala be displeased if you assist someone? (نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ ذٰلِك)

When a person takes interest, then his 'aql' (intelligence) also suffers an imbalance.

Another person disclosed that prior to changing his life, he collected interest monies and utilised that for only the Haraam entertainment he engaged in. He had a separate bank account for his Haraam money, and another that was strictly for Halaal.

His argument had been: Since he was using Haraam for Haraam, the one Haraam would offset and cancel the other Haraam. …When a person makes 'Mashwara' (consults) with shaytaan, then very foolish reasoning and logic are taken into consideration.

[25] Inna Lillahi wa-inna ilayhi ra-ji'oon: To Allah we belong and to Him is our return.

When Allah Ta'ala warns us in the Qur`aan Shareef that be prepared for war with Allah Ta'ala if we take or give interest, whether in small amounts or large amounts, who can prepare for war with Allah Ta'ala? Furthermore, Allah Ta'ala is not in need of Haraam contribution and assistance!

A CURSE OF OUR SOCIETY

Allah Ta'ala says:

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوْا اللّٰهَ وَ ذَرُوْا مَا بَقِىَ مِنَ الرِّبٰوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوْا فَأْذَنُوْا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ

"O THOSE WHO BELIEVE! FEAR ALLAH AND GIVE UP WHAT STILL REMAINS OF THE 'RIBA' (INTEREST) IF YOU ARE BELIEVERS. BUT IF YOU DO NOT, THEN LISTEN TO THE DECLARATION OF WAR FROM ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER..."

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2 : 278/ 279]

Interest is such a major sin in the sight of Allah Ta'ala that He declares war with that person who does not choose to give it up. This severe warning should not go by without reflection.

Allah Ta'ala makes reference to the condition of the devourers of interest on the Day of Qiyamah (Resurrection):

اَلَّذِيْنَ يَأْكُلُوْنَ الرِّبٰوا لاَ يَقُوْمُوْنَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُوْمُ الَّذِى يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ

"THOSE WHO TAKE RIBA (INTEREST/USURY) WILL NOT STAND BUT AS STANDS THE ONE WHOM THE DEMON HAS DRIVEN CRAZY BY TOUCH..."

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2 : 275]

The punishment of Allah Ta'ala is according to the sin committed, in magnitude and gravity. **Those who, in this worldly life, lost their sanity in the pursuit of their greed for wealth, will be raised in the same kind of condition: Insane. Ranting and raving like one possessed by the devil.**

FROM THE AHĀDĪTH

Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) cursed the one who accepts Riba (interest/usury), the one who pays it, the one who writes it, and the persons who give witness to it, and said: **"They are all alike."**[26]

The La'nah (curse) of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is no trivial and trifling matter. **A person bound by the noose of 'La'nah' is completely deprived of the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala, until he sincerely repents thereof.**

Nabi (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ***"There are four kinds of people about whom Allah has decided not to admit them to paradise and not let them taste its bliss: the one who is addicted to wine, the one who takes the Riba, the one who exploits the property of an orphan and the man who is disobedient to his parents."***[27]

If they are Believers, then after punishment, they will be admitted into Jannah. Their forgiveness will also be obtained if they make sincere Taubah in their worldly lives.

Beside the punishment mentioned by Allah Ta'ala, to be meted out to the consumer of interest, the Ahādīth convey various other warnings and punishments.

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[26] Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 4069

[27] Mustadrak (Vol.2 pg.37, also see Targhib, Vol.3 pg.254/328)

…So Ikhlaas is something that we cannot acquire by just reading a kitaab (book). If this was possible then everyone would just pick up a kitaab or even some transcribed lecture on Ikhlaas and Ikhlaas would have entered the heart.

One scholar was reprimanded by his Shaykh and told that he was void of Akhlaaq (good character); that he had no Akhlaaq. He got annoyed and wrote a lengthy book on Akhlaaq, and presented it to the Shaykh.

The Shaykh said: ***"I did not say: 'You don't know Akhlaaq. I said: 'You do not have Akhlaaq!'."***

MUJAHADA AND SUHBAT

Knowledge can be increased, but A'maal and Ikhlaas will only accrue when we keep the Suhbat (company) of the Sawliheen (pious). Their hearts are reservoirs of Ikhlaas because they have endured the paces of Mujahadah (striving), and have waged a struggle against their nafs.

Consider the examples already narrated, of Hazrat Ali (رَضِيَ اللہ عَنْہُ) and Hazrat Abul Hasan Noori (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and the Mujahadah they undertook to become of the Mukhliseen (the sincere ones).

There are numerous incidents in the lives of our pious predecessors. …Time, however, does not permit me to cite more.

The crux of the matter is that when they exerted themselves in Mujahadah against their nafs, Ikhlaas followed. Due to that, not

only did those Muslims who came into contact with them, change their lives, but many non-Muslims accepted Islam.

ANGER

Now let us take, as an example, a malady of our society: Anger. Our anger is not for the sake of Allah Ta'ala. Even when we are engaged in the work of Deen; then too, we will find our anger is motivated by our nafs.

Anger is not Haraam. The positive expression of anger is for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, as in Jihad; but the negative expression of anger is when our notorious nafs plays the game of 'double-dealing'. If we have to really x-ray our hearts, we will find that insincerity dominates our hearts.

SELFISHNESS

A child fulfils all the rights of his father: he presses his head, runs his errands, sees to his needs, manages his business, cares for him and tells him: *"You relax and I will do everything. You worked hard, you established the business, you took care of us and now it is our duty to care for you."*

This son does everything for his father but the only thing seriously amiss in his life is that there is no obedience to Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): He does not perform Salaah, has a clean shaven face, frequents the cinema, theatres and clubs, reads filthy magazines, brings home dirty movies, and has a girlfriend or even girlfriends. Will this father be angry with his son? He won't be angry. Why? …Because his son is a very obedient son. He fulfils

the rights of his father dutifully and earns for him a fortune through the business.

I am talking about the general community and not about exceptions. The father says that his son is the most obedient son: *"I don't even have to get up in the morning. He opens the shop and everything he earns and accumulates, he brings it and places it before me. I just have to open my mouth when I require anything and he is at my service."*

Although this child is disobedient to Allah Ta'ala there is no anger because he is obedient to his father.

On the other hand, we have a child who is very obedient to Allah Ta'ala, but sometimes he does something that displeases his father or mother. Now the temper of the parent flares. **Is this anger for Allah Ta'ala's sake? Was this anger because of the child's disobedience to Allah Ta'ala?**

I hope you understand what I am saying: **Our anger is not because of disobedience to Allah Ta'ala but because of disobedience to us. Because our nafs is annoyed, we 'hit the roof' – so to speak.**

Many a time, parents don't want to accept the truth of their children's statements and actions, because their own thoughts, opinions and actions are in conflict with Islam.

Even though clearly in the wrong, there is opposition and criticism – whether from the side of the mother or father or both. Such parents become an impediment and obstacle to their children's Deen.

Some parents are wont to even take advantage of the situation. One small slip and they begin expounding their rights in the name of Shari'ah – the very same Shari'ah that many of them otherwise choose to ignore.

We may ask these parents: Is this a fair attitude considering that many of their Shar'i rights, as children, have been violated?

Often, parents go so far as to take out all their frustrations on their children. This is not right.

Of course this does not give a license for children, "to give as good as they get", as is the norm and trend we witness these days, of children influenced by television, cinema, music, corrupt and filthy websites on the Internet, and absolute literary trash in the form of novels, magazines, newspapers, comics, etc. **Retaliation, bad character and abusive language are not part of the disposition of a Muslim child.**

Due to our parents nurturing, caring and attending to our various and numerous needs and wants as their children, they have tremendous rights over us. If they are harsh and difficult, then one should resort to Dua and Sabr (patience).

A STORY TOLD

Allah Ta'ala cites a beautiful example, in the Qur`aan Shareef, of a son's care, patience and Dua for his very oppressive father. In Surah Maryam, Allah Ta'ala makes mention a very touching incident in the life of His Khaleel (friend), Hazrat Ibraheem (عَلَيْهِ السَّلام):

وَ اذْكُرْ فِى الْكِتٰبِ إِبْرٰهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيْقاً نَّبِيًّا

“AND MENTION IN THE BOOK (I.E. THE QUR`AAN SHAREEF), IBRAHEEM. VERILY HE WAS A MAN OF TRUTH, A NABI.”

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يٰأَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لاَ يَسْمَعُ وَ لاَ يُبْصِرُ وَ لاَ يُغْنِى عَنْكَ شَيْئاً

WHEN HE SAID TO HIS FATHER: ‘O MY FATHER! WHY DO YOU WORSHIP THAT WHICH HEARS NOT, SEES NOT AND CANNOT AVAIL YOU IN ANYTHING?’

يٰأَبَتِ إِنِّى قَدْ جَآءَنِى مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِى أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطاً سَوِيًّا

O MY FATHER! VERILY THERE HAS COME TO ME OF KNOWLEDGE THAT WHICH CAME NOT UNTO YOU. SO FOLLOW ME. I WILL GUIDE YOU TO A STRAIGHT PATH.

يٰأَبَتِ لاَ تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطٰنَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ عَصِيًّا

O MY FATHER! WORSHIP NOT SHAYTAAN. VERILY SHAYTAAN HAS BEEN A REBEL AGAINST THE MOST BENEFICENT (ALLAH TA’ALA).

يٰأَبَتِ إِنِّى أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ فَتَكُوْنَ لِلشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيًّا

O MY FATHER! VERILY I FEAR LEST A TORMENT FROM THE MOST BENEFICENT (ALLAH TA’ALA) OVERTAKE YOU, SO THAT YOU BECOME A COMPANION OF SHAYTAAN (IN JAHANNUM).

قَالَ أَرَاغِبٌ أَنْتَ عَنْ ءَالِهَتِى يٰإِبْرٰهِيمُ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِى مَلِيًّا

HE (THE FATHER) SAID: ‘DO YOU REJECT MY GODS, O IBRAHEEM? IF YOU STOP NOT (THIS), I WILL INDEED STONE YOU. SO GET AWAY FROM ME SAFELY BEFORE I PUNISH YOU.’

قَالَ سَلَٰمٌ عَلَيۡكَ سَأَسۡتَغۡفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّيٓۖ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ بِي حَفِيّٗا

IBRAHEEM SAID : 'PEACE BE ON YOU! I WILL ASK FORGIVENESS OF MY LORD FOR YOU. VERILY HE IS UNTO ME, EVER MOST GRACIOUS.'"

[SURAH MARYAM 19 : 41-47]

…Despite the fact that his father was an idol-worshipper, associating partners to his beloved Allah Ta'ala, **Hazrat Ibraheem (عَليْهِ السَّلام) addressed him gently, with kind and affectionate words, sincerely advising and encouraging his father to the truth.**

Together with his own father's rejection and disbelief, Hazrat Ibraheem (عَليْهِ السَّلام) had to still contend with harshness, abuse and threats. **Yet again, exemplary character surfaced, when Hazrat Ibraheem (عَليْهِ السَّلام) departs with Salaam, overlooking the treatment that his father meted out to him and still making Dua for him.**

A point to note is that it is not permissible to make Dua of Maghfirah (Forgiveness) for disbelievers after they have died. Hazrat Ibraheem's (عَليْهِ السَّلام) Dua for his father was made prior to him being informed not to.

Nevertheless, Hazrat Ibraheem's (عَليْهِ السَّلام) story presents a beautiful and sufficient lesson in treating parents with kindness, even though they may be disbelievers, or they may be difficult, harsh or unfair at times.

Let us return to the insincerity of our anger…

THE SHAYKH'S REPRIMAND

Sometimes a Shaykh repeatedly corrects a Mureed and still the Mureed does not do as advised. If this Shaykh is a true and Kaamil Shaykh, then his anger upon the Mureed will not be because of his nafs. It will be due to the fact that the Mureed is disobedient to Allah Ta'ala. The Shaykh will therefore reprimand his Mureed.

That Shaykh who is not 'Kaamil' and not 'Muttaqee', will get offended, if after the second reprimand, the Mureed does not conform. His anger is based on the fact that he keeps before himself, his status as a Shaykh, whose every instruction has to be heeded and followed through by his Mureeds. Since he considers only himself, he gets angry when his Mureed does not listen.

This anger is not for Allah Ta'ala but it is because: *"I told him three times and he still has not kept a beard. I told him half a dozen times and he is still taking drugs. I told him so many times and he is still committing Zina."*...This anger is not because the Mureed is indulging in Haraam, displeasing Allah Ta'ala and inviting the wrath of Allah Ta'ala.

A Kaamil Sheikh sympathises and feels for his Mureeds. His repetition and anger is because: ***"If he continues indulging in this Haraam, then one day he will destroy himself."***

…What a world of difference between the two forms of anger!

Brothers, these are facts and matters which are not discussed in many Majaalis. These are serious weaknesses and deficiencies pertaining to the Baatin, to the heart. This is something that we tend to neglect because we do not attach importance to the

dimension of our inner selves. And yet, the Qur`aan Shareef places so much of emphasis and attaches so much of importance on Tazkiyyah (purification).

Allah Ta'ala states:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا

"INDEED HE SUCCEEDS WHO PURIFIES HIS OWNSELF."

And:

وَ قَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

"AND INDEED HE FAILS WHO CORRUPTS HIS OWNSELF."

[SURAH ASH-SHAMS 91 : 9 /10]

We are concerned about 'Zaahiri' (outward) actions only. Yet, even in this, there are numerous flaws, faults and failings. What is the condition of our Salaah? …We are fully aware of the weaknesses in our Salaah.

THE MI'RAJ OF SALAAH

Hazrat Ayesha Siddiqa (رَضِىَ الله عَنْهَا) related that on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'baan, Nabi (صَلىَاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلم) requested her permission to spend the entire night in Ibaadah – since it was not a normal practice to spend the entire night in Ibaadah.

Hazrat Ayesha (رَضِىَ الله عَنْهَا) said that Nabi (صَلىَاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلم) stood up and began his Salaah. He then lay in Sajda (prostration) for so long that she became afraid lest his soul had left his body. So she got up and touched the soles of his feet with her hand… [28]

[28] Sunan Nasai

That was the condition of the Salaah of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) when reading in the privacy of his home. Such was his love for Salaah that he said: **"The coolness of my eye is in Salaah."**[29]

It must be remembered that the Mas'ala (ruling) in regard to Imamat is that it is necessary for the Imam to make the Salaah 'light', because there are all kinds of people in the congregation; some weak and some old.

Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) said: **"When you lead the prayer, you should make it short, because among those offering Salaah there may be some who are infirm, sick, and old."**[30] …Yes, we may lengthen our individual prayers as much as we wish to.

However, that was the condition of the Salaah of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم). We should reflect and consider the condition of our Salaah. …Neither is our Salaah of the desired level, nor is our concern for the purification of our hearts apparent.

Naturally, and it should go without saying that we should not discard the Salaah because of our deficiencies. We should work towards improving our Salaah.

We should also give full attention to the purification of the heart and the reformation of the nafs. If not, then these evils of jealousy, greed, envy, pride, anger, lust, etc. will engulf the heart and corrupt the heart; even destroy it.

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[29] Sunan Nasai, Hadīth: 8887 and Musnad Ahmad, vol. 3 pg. 128

[30] Sahih Bukhari, Hadīth: 703

Consider the fact that all of our Akaabir (elders) had a link with the Mashaa`ik, and all of them spent some time or the other in the Khanqahs of their respective Shaykhs. What was the reason for this?

…It was for the purification of their hearts and souls. They knew that these Ahlullah are reservoirs of Ikhlaas. They also understood that minus the Suhbat of the Ahlullah, their Ilm would remain just a 'shell'.

Of course, the Khanqah must not be for eating, drinking and 'partying'; and the Shaykh must not be a fraudster, milking his mureeds of their hard-earned wealth.

DIVINE INSTRUCTION

What we need to understand is that Ikhlaas is founded on Islaah of the nafs and Tazkiyyah of the heart. **This purification of one's self requires Jihad against one's nafs, and Jihad of the nafs cannot be correctly executed and accomplished without the direction and guidance of a spiritual mentor.**

Therefore, Allah Ta'ala states in the Qur`aan Shareef :

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوْا اللهَ وَ كُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ

"O YOU WHO BELIEVE, FEAR ALLAH AND JOIN THE COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL ONES (THE PIOUS, THE AULIYA ALLAH)."

[SURAH TAUBAH 9 : 119]

The very fact that Allah Ta'ala is directing us to keep company with the righteous and pious – with His Friends – indicates that they will always be in society, though they may be scarce.

We have to search for them, learn Ikhlaas from them, and purify our souls in their company, even if we are graduated in Islamic sciences.

This road cannot be traversed alone. If we want ease and success on this journey, we will have to choose a righteous, learned, pious, experienced spiritual guide.

My journey has become easy;
Even the winds have changed direction.
...When your hands came into my hands,
Even the lamps of the road lit up.

Do not adopt an attitude of independence and aloofness from the Mashaa`ik. Without their guidance, success on this path is just wishful thinking.

However, great caution must be exercised in the choice of one's Shaykh. He must be an Allah Wala and not a fraud.

THE ISLAAH OF A SHAYKHUL HADITH

One Shaykh-ul-Hadīth[31] wrote to Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ): *"I get angry very often...* (Imagine a Shaykh-ul-Hadīth said this)... *and in this state I lose my self-control. I then give vent to my anger, which sometimes exceeds the limits of Shari'ah."*

It was not necessary for him to expose his weakness. He could have continued to conceal it, continued receiving gifts from his students, shaking hands and listening to them sing his praises.

[31] A Scholar who is exceptionally qualified in the science of Hadīth.

However, he was sincerely concerned about the condition of his nafs and also his condition and status in the sight of Allah Ta'ala. He knew that his anger was not for the sake of Deen.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) replied, prescribing a severe remedy: ***"The next time you lose your temper with someone, then hold his feet and plead with him: 'Please forgive me.'"*** …Would holding the feet of a person and pleading for his forgiveness be an easy thing for a Shaykh-ul-Hadīth?

However, he started to practise upon that prescription and after a week wrote back and informed Hazrat Maulana that he was not as yet cured. **Consider his concern and fear!** …This is exactly what we are found wanting in, and this is the point I am presenting to you: **We must not die with malice, greed, pride, arrogance, Riyaa (show) and a host of other filth in our hearts. What will we face in the grave if we are going to enter it with this kind of a heart?**

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) advised him: "*Now ask the student or the person upon whom you expressed unjustifiable anger, to remove his shoes, turn it upside down and place it on your head for five minutes, and tell him that you are trying to cure your spiritual illness."* This Shaykh-ul-Hadīth wrote back saying that the prescription was so bitter that before completing the letter, he was cured.

What would have been our reaction to such advice from the Shaykh? …We would have said: *'Thank you very much for your advice. You can keep the Bay'ah. I am going to another Shaykh.'*

In the case of the Shaykh-ul-Hadīth, despite his distinguished status, there was extreme concern over the effects of his anger.

This is that same anger that is causing havoc in society. Over petty matters, we resort to extremes, like firing Talaaq, resorting to verbal and physical abuse, beatings, killings, etc. – all of which have become most common.

Nabi's (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) Akhlaaq offers us the perfect example. Without justification, he never resorted to any kind of action that would harm another – be it a human being; Muslim or non-Muslim, or even an animal.

Hazrat Anas (رَضِيَ الله عَنْه) had attended to Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) for ten years and said: ***"I remained in the service of Rasulullah*** (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) ***for ten years. Not once did he utter: 'Uff' to me (i.e. in displeasure). When I did something, he never asked me: 'Why did you do so?' And when I did not do a certain task, he never asked me: 'Why did you not do it?' Rasulullah*** (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) ***had the best character among all people."***

This does not mean that it is forbidden to correct a person in the wrong, or a person not doing justice to work assigned to him. It is permissible, but one should not exceed the limits.

…What I had intended to speak on and what was said.

May Allah Ta'ala accept what has been said. May Allah Ta'ala grant to me the Taufeeq to say whatever I am saying with Ikhlaas. Make Dua that Allah Ta'ala fills my heart with Ikhlaas because if I am going to speak with Riyaa, I will get nothing here and nothing in the Hereafter.

Delivering these words and talks carry along with them the fear of accountability. However, it is still necessary upon those blessed

with knowledge of Deen to carry out the duty of imparting knowledge.

Whilst Ikhlaas is not easily acquired, it is not impossible to procure. I always maintain that even if a person does not have Ikhlaas, then too, he should not discontinue doing good deeds.

To cite an example: If a person does not have Ikhlaas in his Salaah, and he is punctually performing his Salaah, five times a day, with Jamaat and in the Masjid, then this does not mean that he must stop performing Salaah.

Without the action of Salaah, how will he develop sincerity in Salaah? **…There must be a vessel to fill water in, and there must be an action to 'fill' Ikhlaas in.**

CLIMBING THE LADDER TO IKHLAAS

Hazrat Hāji Imdadullah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had said that sometimes an action begins with Riyaa, and then it becomes a habit. Thus, a person initially performs his Salaah with Riyaa but sooner or later it becomes a habit.

After performing Ibaadah for some time, with Riyaa, the person realises that he will get nothing for his Tahajjud, Tilawah, Zikr, Ibaadah, etc. because it is for show. Due to the fact that many forms of Ibaadah are obligatory, or exceptional in virtue and rewards, he continues, as is his habit. However, he now corrects his intention and undertakes his deeds wanting to earn the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. When he perceives and understands the bounty of the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, that habit finally becomes Ikhlaas.

If he had left it off at the beginning, saying that he has no Ikhlaas, how would he have developed Ikhlaas?

Do not ignore or neglect Ibaadah because of a deficiency in Ikhlaas. Ikhlaas requires effort and perseverance.

Besides this, it is expected that shaytaan too, will whisper various thoughts to discourage a person; but we should continue and devote ourselves to good deeds, be it Zikrullah, Tilawah, Tahajjud, Chasht, Umrah, Hajj and so forth.

Begin good deeds for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. In between and after the deed, make Taubah from whatever insincerity may have blemished that good deed.

Then again, we should not be satisfied that we have got Ikhlaas-e-Kaamil and have reached the stage that great Auliya-Allah reach. We have to be very much on guard against the snares of shaytaan.

He attacks the 'Aabideen (people of worship) in a different form, and he attacks the businessmen and traders in the bazaars and market places in a different form, and he comes to those who are in the gambling dens, casinos and cinemas in a different form. He is a master in the field of deception.

We need to sincerely connect ourselves with Allah Ta'ala and repeatedly and humbly beg of Allah Ta'ala: ***"O Allah, we are very weak. Save us from the webs, traps and tricks of nafs and shaytaan. O Allah, we want to be Yours and we want You to become ours. If You are not going to safeguard us and protect us then we will not be able to protect ourselves."***

Dua for Istiqaamat (steadfastness) is the attribute of an ‘Abd (a true servant of Allah Ta’ala). Insha-Allah, this concern will be a means of Allah Ta’ala granting us the desired quality of Ikhlaas.

When Ikhlaas will develop within our hearts, we will then experience a ‘Kaifiyyat’ – a very different kind of feeling – in our hearts. There will be happiness and joy that one’s Ibaadah was done seeking the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala.

A CONDITION OF HEART

The immediate reward that Allah Ta’ala grants to the Mukhliseen is happiness and contentment in the heart. In a similar vein, the immediate punishment for sin is restlessness, anxiety and worry, which afflicts and torments the heart.

…When ill health and sickness visit the Ahlullah, their thoughts are focussed on the fact: **If I die then I am going to meet my beloved Allah Ta’ala.**

Whilst they take treatment and ask for life to accumulate good deeds, these lovers of Allah Ta’ala look forward to death.

“Death is the bridge whereby the lover meets the Beloved.”

When my Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), had a heart attack, he made mention of a few Duas that he had made to Allah Ta’ala, if that had to be his last illness. He said:

“O Allah, become pleased with me.

O Allah, show me some Tajalli[32] of Yours so that my soul comes dancing towards You.

O Allah, forgive all my sins.

O Allah, grant 'Sabrun Jameel' to those who will be remaining after me."

Allah Ta'ala willed his recovery and Alhamdulillah, he continued with his tremendous services to Deen.[33]

Thus, the sole concern of the Auliya Allah is that they must meet Allah Ta'ala in a manner that He is pleased with them. Unfortunately, for many of us, the main concern is the material commodities that have been amassed; the gold, the silver, or the business, property, family and so forth, which will be left behind.

Whilst the concern should be, in what condition we will die and what deeds we will be presenting to Allah Ta'ala, the unease and the fear is sometimes regarding separation from the worldly possessions.

When the heart is enamoured with sand, then the sand of the physical body is sacrificed and wasted over the sand of the material objects of this temporary, fleeting and perishable world. The person who forgets Allah Ta'ala, forgets himself: the purpose of his creation, and the reality of the Aakhirah.

Ponder over the words of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): **"Verily, the world has been created for you and you have been created for the Hereafter."[34]**

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[32] Tajalli: A light or manifestation.

[33] Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) passed away about two years after Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ).

Allah Ta'ala kindly informs, cautions and warns us, time and again in the Qur`aan Shareef :

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْأَخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّ أَبْقٰى

"YOU PREFER THE WORLDLY LIFE (TO THE HEREAFTER), WHEREAS THE HEREAFTER IS BEST AND EVERLASTING."

[SURAH A'ALA 87 : 16 /17]

وَ مَا الْحيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا مَتٰعُ الْغُرُوْرِ

"...AND WHAT IS THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD, BUT GOODS AND CHATTELS OF DECEPTION?"

[SURAH AL-HADEED 57 : 20]

اَلْمَالُ وَ الْبَنُوْنَ زِيْنَةُ الْحيٰوةِ الدُّنْيا وَ الْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا

وَّ خَيْرٌ أَمَلاً

"WEALTH AND SONS ARE THE ADORNMENT OF THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD. BUT THE GOOD RIGHTEOUS DEEDS THAT LAST, ARE BETTER WITH YOUR LORD FOR REWARDS AND BETTER IN RESPECT OF HOPE."

[SURAH AL-KAHF 18 : 46]

وَ مَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَّ لَعِبٌ ؕ وَ إِنَّ الدَّارَ الْأٰخِرَةَ لَهِىَ الْحَيَوَانُ ۘ

لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

"AND THIS LIFE OF THE WORLD IS ONLY AN AMUSEMENT AND A PLAY! VERILY, THE HOME OF THE HEREAFTER – THAT IS THE LIFE INDEED (I.E. THE ETERNAL LIFE THAT WILL NEVER END), IF THEY BUT KNEW."

[SURAH AL-'ANKABOOT 29 : 64]

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[34] Shu'abul Imaan

Let us give preference to the everlasting over what is temporary, short-lived and so fleeting. If we do not do so, we will reach the Aakhirah with great regret.

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لاَ تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوٰلُكُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلٰدُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ وَ مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ

فَأُوْلٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ

"O YOU WHO BELIEVE, LET NOT YOUR WEALTH AND YOUR CHILDREN DIVERT YOU FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH; AND WHOSOEVER DOES THAT, THEN THEY ARE THE LOSERS."

[SURAH MUNAFIQOON 63 : 9]

This subject matter, in itself, calls for much discussion and explanation. However, this much suffices as 'food' for our thoughts.

SIMPLE PRESCRIPTIONS

Allah Ta'ala wants that every Believer, every Muslim, you and I, no matter how far away we may be, and no matter how much we may have distanced ourselves from Him, to become His friend. And this is not impossible. Do not regard Wilayat[35] (friendship with Allah Ta'ala) as a very difficult thing.

In these times, none of the Mashaa`ik will prescribe that a person stands on the shores of the ocean, on one leg, and reads one Tasbeeh, ten thousand times… Nothing of the kind.

The prescription of the times is the simplest and easiest, and the only effort that is really required, in these times of Fitnah[36] and

[35] Wilayat: Friendship (with Allah Ta'ala)

[36] Fitnah: Trials (also implies corruptions, mischief, etc.)

corruption, is that together with fulfilling those duties that are Fardh, Waajib and Sunnah, we restrain ourselves from all sins. A little Zikr, accompanying this, will then yield great results. We will. Insha-Allah, also see what Ikhlaas Allah Ta'ala grants in the heart, and what rewards follow on Ikhlaas.

EASY WILAYAT

My Shaykh (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) sighted a beautiful analogy. He said that in the times of past, to cook a meal took a lengthy period of time: wood had to be chopped, a fire had to be kindled, and after some time a meal would be prepared. In our time, there is no need for any of this. Allah Ta'ala granted man the intelligence to invent the stove, the microwave, the pressure cooker, etc. In a matter of minutes, food is cooked.

In the times of past, to become a Wali of Allah Ta'ala required much more effort. Since Fitnah and Fasaad[37] were not widespread as is found today, the Mujahada (spiritual striving) was in positive Zikr. Thus, a person was required to read thousands of Tasbeehs in a day and hundreds of Rakaats of Nafl (optional) Salaah, and also keep plenty of Nafl fasts.

Like it takes a minimum amount of time to cook a meal in our times, it takes even less than that to become a Wali of Allah Ta'ala: A person makes sincere Taubah from all sins and thereafter abstains from everything Haraam and displeasing to Allah Ta'ala and fulfils all the Rights of Allah Ta'ala, His Rasul (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and creation.

[37] Fasaad : Corruption / Disorder

IMMEDIATE WILAYAT

A young person, after listening to a talk, experienced a revolution in his heart. He asked me: *"With my past, with the sins in my life, how is it possible for me to become a Wali[38]?"*

I said: *"It is extremely simple. It takes just one minute to become a Wali. Raise your hands and with deep regret and remorse in your heart, shed a few tears and pray to Allah Ta'ala: 'O Allah, I have wasted my life, but I want to become Your Wali; I want to become Your friend. So forgive all the sins that I have committed since maturity, and grant me the Taufeeq to do that which pleases You in my future life.'*

You have immediately become a Wali. Now make an effort towards fulfilling those rights that were violated. ***The effort made indicates to the sincerity of your Taubah."***

If Salaah and Fasts were missed then Qaza[39] must necessarily be fulfilled. If Zakaah, Qurbani and Sadaqatul Fitr were not fulfilled, then these monies must necessarily be paid. The same applies to monies that are owing to people. Pay back to whomsoever, what is due, or ask them to forgive. If not, then that Taubah will not be complete. And if harm or injury was caused to another, his forgiveness should be sought.

If there are a number of outstanding Salaah or fasts due, then it is obvious that a person cannot read all the Qazas in one day, or keep all his missed fasts in one day. This will take due time.

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[38] Wali : Friend of Allah Ta'ala

[39] Qaza : Religious duty performed after the expiry of its time.

However, the intention of the person, to fulfil all dues of Allah Ta'ala and creation, and the effort made in that direction makes the person a friend and beloved of Allah Ta'ala.

If the person does not make any effort in that direction after Taubah, then this is a clear sign that he was not sincere in his Taubah. Also, in respect to his future life, every effort should be made not to return to sins.

Allah Ta'ala states in the Qur`aan Shareef, regarding those who make Taubah:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوّٰبِيْنَ

"...VERILY ALLAH LOVES THOSE WHO REPENT..."

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2 : 222]

...Now let us make Dua to Allah Ta'ala.

DU’AA

O Allah, bless us all with the Taufeeq of Aml, with Ikhlaas and Maqbooliyat.

O Allah, forgive us our past sins and give us the courage to restrain ourselves from indulging in any form of disobedience to You in future.

O Allah, bless us with the purification of our hearts, from greed, pride, malice, insincerity, show, anger, envy and jealousy.

O Allah, bless us all with the best of Dunya and Aakhirah.

O Allah, fill our hearts with Your Love and the Love of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم).

O Allah, bless us with such a bond with You that nafs and shaytaan cannot distance us from You.

O Allah, protect us, as well as the entire Ummah, from all the fitnahs that are lashing at us, from all sides.

O Allah, forgive all those who have passed away.

O Allah, when our time of death arrives, then let it be in a state of Imaan, and at a time when You are pleased with us.

O Allah, we ask of You all the goodness which had been asked for, by Your Messenger, Muhammad (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم); and we seek Your protection from all evil things from which Your Messenger, Muhammad (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) had asked protection from; Only You are capable of helping us.

(Aameen)

DUA FOR PROTECTION FROM MINOR SHIRK.

Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) narrated that Rasulullah (صَلى الله عَليهِ وَسَلَم) said: "***Ascribing partners to Allah in my Ummah is much more hidden than the pace of an ant crawling upon a black stone.***"

Shirk is very hidden. It enters the heart very silently and very few are saved from it.

Upon hearing this, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) asked: "*How can one be saved from it?*"

Rasulullah (صَلى الله عَليهِ وَسَلَم) said: "*Should I not show you such a supplication (Dua) that if you recite it, you will be free from minor and major Shirk.*"

Hazrat Abu Bakr (رَضِیَ اللہ عَنْه) requested him to do so. Rasulullah (صَلى الله عَليهِ وَسَلَم) instructed him to say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَعُوْذُ بِكَ أَنْ اُشْرِكَ بِكَ شَيئًا وَّ أَنَاْ أَعْلَمُ

وَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لاَ اَعْلَمُ

"O Allah, I seek protection in You from that I ascribe partners to You knowingly and I seek forgiveness from You for those things which I do not know."[40]

• Minor Shirk is the doing of good actions for show, name, fame or recognition.

[40] Kanzul Ummaal, Vol.2 pg.816

PRESCRIPTION FOR REFLECTION AND REFORMATION

Allamah Jalaluddeen Suyuti (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had recorded, from a narration in Kanzul 'Ummaal, that once a person came into the blessed company of Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) and asked Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) several questions regarding some important matters. After praising Allah Ta'ala, Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم) answered the person's questions. The dialogue was as follows:

The person: "O Allah's Nabi (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم)! I desire to become a great Aalim."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Keep on fearing Allah, you will become a great Aalim."***

(By fearing Allah Ta'ala and obeying His Orders, the treasure of knowledge and wisdom will manifest itself within the person.)

The person: "I wish to become wealthy."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Choose contentment, you will become wealthy."***

The person: "I desire to become the best of people."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"The best of people is he who benefits people."***

The person: "I want to become the most just person."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"If you do for others what you like for yourself, you will become the most just person."***

The person: "I wish to become the favourite in the court of Allah."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Engage yourself in the remembrance of Allah, your desire will be fulfilled."***

The person: "I desire to be counted among the pious."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Worship Allah as if you are seeing Him. If this is not possible then know that definitely He is seeing you."***

The person: "I wish that my Imaan should become perfect."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Rectify your character, your Imaan will be perfected."***

The person: "I wish to be included amongst the obedient."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Continue performing your obligatory duties, you will be counted amongst the obedient."***

The person: "I desire to stand in the presence of Allah in the condition that I am free from all sins."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Perform the bath of Janaabat, (through its blessings you will be resurrected) on the day of Qiyamah, free from all sins."***

The person: "I wish to be resurrected with light on the plain of resurrection."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Do not oppress anyone, you will be resurrected with light on the day of Qiyamah."***

The person: "I desire that Allah should show His mercy upon me."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Show mercy upon yourself and the creation of Allah, Allah will show mercy upon you."***

The person: "I wish my sins to decrease."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Seek forgiveness from Allah; your sins will decrease."***

The person: "I wish to become honoured."
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Do not complain to people in times of difficulty and calamities, you will be honoured."***

The person : "I desire abundance of sustenance."
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"Remain constantly in the state of purity, there will be blessings in your sustenance."***

The person: "I wish to become the friend of Allah and His Rasul (صلى الله عليه وسلم)*."*
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"Like that which Allah and His Rasul like and dislike that which Allah and His Rasul dislike."***

The person: "I desire protection from the anger of Allah."
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"Do not become angry on anyone without any valid Shar'i reason, you will be saved from the anger of Allah."***

The person: "I wish to become a person whose Duas are accepted in the Court of Allah."
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"Abstain from Haraam (unlawful) things and Haraam talk."***

The person: "I desire that Allah should not disgrace me in front of everyone on the day of Qiyamah."
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"Hide the faults of your brother, Allah will cover your faults."***

The person : "How will my errors be pardoned?"
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"By crying out due to the fear of Allah, by humbling oneself in front of Allah and by sickness."***

The person: "Which is the most excellent deed in the Sight of Allah?"
Rasulullah (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ***"Good character, humbleness, to exercise patience in difficulty and hard conditions and to express happiness on the decision of Allah."***

The person: "Which is the most evil action in the sight of Allah?"
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Bad character and stinginess."***

The person: "Which action prevents the wrath of Allah?"
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"To give charity secretly, to fulfil the rights of the relatives and to meet them with kindness."***

The person: "What extinguishes the fire of Jahannum?"
Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم): ***"Salaah and fasting."***

Sometimes, there are many fruit on one branch, while on other branches of the tree, there are very few fruit. Have you not seen such a thing?

There are some guava or mango trees where some of the branches are laden with fruit, while other branches are barren, due to the sun not shining on that part of the tree.

In the same way, it depends on which branch of Deen, Ikhlaas is directed on. **That branch will bear the most fruit, where the Khidmat is accompanied with Ikhlaas.**

Sometimes, there are lots of branches on a tree. In the same way, there can be lots of Madaaris, Makaatib[41] or Muballigheen[42] but the quantity does not affect the quality of the fruit. **The quality depends on the level of Ikhlaas.**

[41] Makaatib: Primary level madrasahs
[42] Muballigheen: Those who propagate and preach Islam

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